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Candlemas (Imbolc) Ritual: 2 February

The White Bard

Materials

- a candle for each covener present.
- a MAIDEN, dressed in white.
- a Crown of Light, made from three, six, or nine candles.
- a BARD/GREEN MAN.
- a DARK LORD, dressed in dark clothing, and holding a dark cloak.

The place of ritual should be set up, away from the gathered participants. It is more than a good idea to manage bathrooms and such like before the circle is closed. This Mystery is not something any of the participants should miss out on!

The BARD should stand to the WEST, unless otherwise specified in the ritual.

> HPS
> Go we now to the sacred place
> And stand within the sacred space
> Turn your minds to sacred things
> And dance with me unto the ring!

HP and HPS lead the coven to the place of ritual by a spiral dance, ending in a circle around the altar. The cauldron should be at the south. The Bard/Green Man dances at the end of the line. A good song to sing here is "Lord Of The Dance."

HPS
Come we forth, with the Spiral Dance
Within the Lady's radiance
To celebrate the Sun's rebirth
To renew life, to warm the Earth

Earth and Water, Fire and Air
I invoke the Goddess there!
This night we are Between the Worlds
To celebrate the year unfurled!

HP
Earth and Water, Fire and Sky
I invoke the God on high
This night we are Between the Worlds
To celebrate the year unfurled!

The corners shall be called thusly, that all may hear, but shall not be called until the HPS reaches that corner on her circumnabulation.

EAST
O Guardians of the Eastern Tower,
Airy ones of healing power
I do summon, stir and call you
See these rites and guard this circle!

Come to us and heed our call!
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
Come to us; and Blessed Be!

SOUTH
Oh fiery ones of Southern Power
Thus I invite you to this tower
I do summon, stir and call you
See these rites and guard this circle!

Come to us and heed our call!
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
Come to us; and Blessed Be!

WEST
Western ones of water's flow
Help to guard us here below
I do summon, stir and call you
See these rites and guard this circle!

Come to us and heed our call!
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
Come to us; and Blessed Be!

NORTH
Earthen ones of Northern fame
Bless and guard our Power's fane
I do summon, stir and call you
See these rites and guard this circle!

Come to us and heed our call!
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
Come to us; and Blessed Be!

The HPS shall move to each corner, and say, following each corner's crying as she moves to the next:

HPS
So I cast and consecrate
This Circle of the small and great:
By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree,
By Rock and Earth, by Land and Sea,
By Fire and Water, Earth and Air,
By the Lord, and Lady Fair!
By Love and Joy and Work and Play,
All things harmful cast away!
By lightening's flash, and rain's soft fall,
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
(Cast the Circle: Blessed be!)

On her return to the first corner she shall change the last line above, and say:

The Circle's cast; and Blessed Be!

The callers of the corners shall return their tools to the altar, and then shall join the circle at their corners.

Here begins the Candlemas (Imbolc) Mystery: The Maiden shall step forth, and say:

MAIDEN
This is the time of Brigid, the Patron of Poets and Fire, and of Healing.

HPS
This is the time of new beginnings, when the Mother has become Maiden.

HP
The days have turned, and grow longer, and the Sun-child is growing to His strength.

BARD/GREEN MAN
I have been a wave upon the sea,
And a spark in the firelight.

I have been a fish in the ocean.
I have been a Thought within a Word,
And a Word within a Deed.
I was cast away, and found again.

I have been made of flowers
And of cold steel and brass.
Fire and ice are alike unto me.

I have been the narrow blade of a sword
That kills without cutting.
And the Void is my homeland.

I have been in Caer Sidi
In the Spiral Castle of Glass.
And the letters on the Standing Stones
Are no secret from me.

I have been in Annwyn
And Tir na n'Og,
I have danced the Spiral Dance,
And drunk from the Hierlas at daybreak.

I have ridden beneath two ravens
And served in the kitchen,
And all places are alike unto me.

I have been a child
And now I come into my strength!

I invoke the Land, the dear Land,
the Earth our Mother!

MAIDEN
The cycles of the Moon have taken their course, and I am in my Maidenhood. The stars are kindled, and I dance in their light.

DARK LORD
Thy home is with me thru the long months of Winter, and the Earth shall lie fallow and bare.

The HPS shall then light the candles of the Crown of Light, and shall approach the Maiden, who is now standing in the East, and place it upon her head.

She shall now, in company with the Bard/Green Man, circumnabulate the circle, and the coveners shall light their candles from her crown. The Bard/Green Man shall return to his normal place within the circle and the Maiden shall place the Crown of Light on the altar. The Maiden shall then approach the Dark Lord, and kneel before him, and he shall say:

DARK LORD
As it always is, always was, and always shall be. Come to my Kingdom.

Here he shall place the dark cloak around her, and they shall retire to the West. Here ends the Candlemas Mystery.

A normal cone-of-power may be raised, for growth and healing:

HPS
In a ring we all shall stand
Pass the Power, hand to hand.

HP
As the Sun is given birth
Build the Power; root to Earth

HPS
Pass the Power, hand to hand
Bless the Lady, bless the Land

HP
Bless the Lord, and bless the Skies
Bless the Power that never dies!

The above four verses should be repeated three times, (or as many times as needed) and then the HPS should say:

> HPS
> By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree:
> Let the Power flow out and free!

All should release, at this point.

Such coven business as must be transacted may be done here. This is a good time to bless candles for use during the coming year. This is also a good time for initiations.

The Circle is opened.

> HPS
> Thus I release the East and West
> Thanks to them from Host to Guest
> Thus I release the South and North
> With "Blessed Be' I send them forth!
> The Circle's open, dance we so
> Out and homeward we shall go.
> Earth and Water, Air and Fire
> Celebrated our desire.
> The Sun's returned to banish dark
> The Earth awakes to sunlight's spark.
> By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree,
> Our circle's done; and Blessed Be!

> COVEN
> Blessed Be!

All spiral dance out from the Circle.

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